

**Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park
Park Advisory Commission Meeting**

June 18, 2009

Strasburg Town Hall
Strasburg, Virginia

- I) General Introduction
- II) Review of Minutes from March 18, 2009 meeting
- III) Meeting Schedule for 2009–2010
- IV) Park Advisory Commission Vacancies
- V) GMP Status
- VI) GMP Comments and NPS Response
- VII) Correspondence received after February 27, 2009, and the NPS Response
- VIII) Old Business
- IX) New Business
- X) Next Meeting

Meeting Notes

Commission members in attendance: Fred Andreae, Mary Bowser, Patrick Farris, Diann Jacox, Designated Federal Official; Randy Jones, Sarah Mauck, Elizabeth McClung, Pam Sheets, Jim Smalls, Dan Stickley.

Commission members absent: Gene Dicks, Roy Downey, Gary Rinkerman, Kris Tierney, chair.

Others in attendance: Carl Bernhards Jr., Middletown council member; Stacy Chandler, private individual; Suzanne Chilson, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation; Sue Golden,

private individual; Bob Grogg, NPS volunteer; Wendy Hamilton, Preserve Frederick; Brent Laurenz, Civil War Preservation Trust; Dawn LeCouffe, private individual; Pam LeCouffe, private individual; Nicholas Picerno, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Beth Stern, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, Chris Stubbs, NPS; Ric Van Norton, private individual.

Randy Jones, vice chair, opened the meeting in Kris Tierney's absence.

Diann Jacox spoke about the meeting schedule for the next year as it must soon be published in the *Federal Register*. It was decided that, in order to accommodate the schedule of one of the commission members who has a standing conflict to change the start time to 8:30 am. At the September meeting we will show a DVD of the new Ken Burns film – *This is America*, which focuses on the history of the national park system.

A fair number of the commissioners' appointments are due to expire soon. Diann will be working on finding replacements for them. In the meantime current members will remain on the commission until new replacement members received approval from the Department of the Interior.

The park received 37 pieces of correspondence on the GMP before the official public comment period ended on February 27, 2009. The consultants who worked on preparing the GMP are incorporating those comments and showing the NPS response to their comments. The GMP will then be submitted to the Washington Office with a request to print the final version. Diann did not talk about all the comments, but addressed those responses that asked questions about the plan or expressed a viewpoint different from that of the plan.

Someone questioned why an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had to be done for land the NPS did not own. Diann explained that the EIS describes how the National Park Service will manage the land should it ever own specific areas within the park; and what the National Park Service, through technical assistance, will encourage others to do should the land remain in the hand of private landowners. If the NPS does not own the land, it can only encourage landowners to use the policies that the NPS would; it has no enforcement powers over property that it does not own. She stressed that the NPS does not have the authority to require private property landowners to follow its policies or to decide what private landowners can and cannot do with their private property. One of the basic values of the NPS is to preserve cultural and natural resources. The NPS will encourage private landowners to do the same, but the NPS can only encourage. New wording in the plan on private property rights will clarify that private landowners within the park will retain the same rights and responsibilities that they would have if they owned land outside of the park. Diann recognized that the term "management zones" scares people, but it is a term that the NPS uses throughout its system, and it would be pointless to introduce a new term that would have no meaning within the NPS.

In regard to a future Friends Group, Diann noted that the exact wording found in the Park Advisory Commission's comments on the GMP, will be incorporated into the GMP.

One respondent had concerns about the NPS policy towards livestock in the park. Diann explained that there are many areas within the park boundary that are in fescue grasses and it's entirely appropriate to keep livestock in those areas. In other areas where sensitive plants and water quality need to be protected, livestock would be inappropriate. The NPS can make recommendations to a landowner about the protection of sensitive plants or water quality, but the NPS cannot mandate that livestock be removed from the property. The NPS can provide technical assistance to willing landowners on protecting natural resources.

Several comments expressed concern that artifacts found on their private property must be turned over to the NPS. The reality is that anything found on a person's property remains the person's property. If the NPS is asked for assistance in regard to any artifacts, it will do so in harmony with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

One letter inquired whether NPS would construct a new visitor center facility or reuse an existing structure. Diann said that the NPS is completely open to the idea of either adaptive reuse or new construction for a visitor center. Absolutely no thought has gone into what shape, form, or location a future visitor center will take.

A comment expressed concern that NPS interpreters might conduct tours or interpretive programs on private land without the permission of private landowner. Diann stressed that the NPS does not have the authority to put interpreters on private land without the permission of the landowner. The Key Partners should be willing to direct visitors to one another's holdings, but the NPS will not sponsor interpretive programs on private land without first obtaining permission from a private property owner in advance. Eventually permission will take the form of written cooperative agreements. The NPS has a commitment to honor private land ownership; that position will not change.

There has been much discussion over the terms *visitor center* and *visitor contact facility*. The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation has made the decision to call their facility the *Cedar Creek Battlefield Headquarters* and the GMP will be changed to reflect that.

Some reviewers commented that the Plan underemphasized the importance and potential contributions that other partnerships, outside of those with the legislated Key Partners, can make. The plan is being modified to express the importance of other types of partnerships.

Other reviewers felt that that the GMP characterized the reenactments in a negative fashion. Diann explained that GMP is also an EIS and describes large events in terms of their impacts on natural and cultural resources. She acknowledged that the reenactment is also an interpretive and educational opportunity and the GMP will be changed to reflect this. The NPS will support the reenactment now and in the future. The land within the large events zone is owned by three different entities; collaboration is important.

Some respondents asked that horse trails be developed. At present that NPS does not have the land base or financial means to develop such trails. The situation in the future may be different, but currently the NPS will direct people wishing to utilize horse trails to the nearby George Washington National Forest.

The belief that the partners will be required to contribute to NPS land purchase is without any foundation. The park will establish a friends group, separate from the Key Partners who will assist with land acquisition. The NPS has contributed funds to partners for land acquisition, but has not required the partners to contribute funds to the park. .

All the letters and emails received before February 27, 2009, will be printed in the final GMP. The letters and petitions—one containing 304 signatures—that were received after the deadline were analyzed to determine whether they raised issues, that were not raised in the comments received before the close of the comment period. The Key Partners have already responded to one letter that appeared in the *Civil War Courier*.

At the completion of Diann's remarks, Randy Jones addressed the commissioners and the audience saying that if anyone wished to make a statement, now would be the time to do so.

Richard Van Norton, a private landowner, said that he was coming to have an increasing understanding of what the NPS was doing and what it meant to have a national park in the area. His belief was that the GMP should say exactly what the situation would be in the future so that everyone could go into this relationship with their eyes open.

Stacy Chandler said that she hoped that the reenactments would continue. They draw people into the story and give them an understanding of this area's history; they have the ability to inspire all who see these events.

Sue Golden said that she had reviewed the GMP with seven other lawyers. They did not believe that the NPS had listened to them and therefore wrote a 7-page letter detailing their concerns. She said that "I love what I heard today."

Carl Bernhards Jr. asked how long this process will go on. Will there be an end to taking comments?

Both Diann and Randy spoke to this question, saying that any public endeavor is an on-going process; that people have to keep talking because not everyone pays attention at the same time. Everyone wants to avoid misunderstandings.

New Business

Elizabeth McClung announced that the Hite Family Reunion will take place the last weekend in July. They will dedicate a monument at the Long Meadow cemetery and have private tours of Harmony Hall, Mount Pleasant, and Lucky Hit. If anyone is interested, please let Elizabeth know.

Sarah Mauck announced that Strasburg has a new historic district ordinance.

Randy thanked the town of Strasburg for their hospitality and the Groggs for putting on the picnic for Chris Stubbs.

Randy Jones adjourned the meeting at noon.

The next meeting is September 17, 2009, at Middletown Town Hall.

Handouts

1. Agenda
2. GMP Status Update
3. Meeting Notes from March 19, 2009.
4. Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2009–2010
5. Park Advisory Commission Vacancies as of June 18, 2009